1. A network of interconnected helper servers, each comprising

means for receiving requests for at least portions of continuous media objects from at least one receiver and at least one other of said helping servers,

5 means for storing selected first portions of continuous media objects received originating at least one source server and others of said helper servers,

means for selectively forwarding stored portions of continuous media objects to others of said helping servers and receivers requesting at least portions of said continuous media objects.

10 2. The network of claim 1 wherein said continuous media objects comprise a plurality of ordered segments, and wherein said continuous media objects, and portions thereof, are arranged in serial sequences of said segments.

3. The network of claim 2 wherein each of said helper servers comprises means for receiving segments of a continuous media object from a plurality of servers for 15 delivery to a receiver, said plurality of servers being selected from a group of servers comprising others of said helper servers and said at least one source server.

4. The network of claim 3 wherein each of said helper servers comprises means for receiving advertising messages from others of said helper servers, said advertising messages indicating the availability at respective ones of said other helper 20 servers of segments of an identified continuous media object.

5. The network of claim 2 wherein a plurality of said helper servers each store at least one segment of an identified continuous media object, said segments stored at said plurality of said helper servers collectively forming the entire continuous media object.

25 6. The network of claim 2 wherein at least one of said helper servers stores an initial segment of at least one continuous media object having a popularity greater than a predetermined threshold popularity.

7. In a network of helpers for delivery to a plurality of receivers of continuous media objects, each of said objects originating at one of a plurality of

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sources, a method at each of a first set of helpers for distributing state information to others of said helpers, the method comprising

periodically transmitting said state information from each helper in said first set to a plurality of sets of others of said helpers, the period of said transmitting to each of said

5   sets of others of said helpers being determined by scope values associated with said helpers in said first set of helpers.

8.   The method of claim 7 wherein said scope is determined for a given helper in said first set of helpers by the distance of said others of said helpers from said given helper.

10   9.   The method of claim 8 wherein said scope is chosen from a set of scope values comprising local, regional, national and global scopes.

10.   The method of claim 7 wherein, for a given helper in said first set of helpers, said period of said transmitting is longer for said others of said helpers that are more remote from said given helper.

15   11.   The method of claim 8 wherein said scope is further determined for a given helper in said first set of helpers by the temporal distance of said others of said helpers from said given helper.